97-84046-30

The Church and social reconstruction

New York

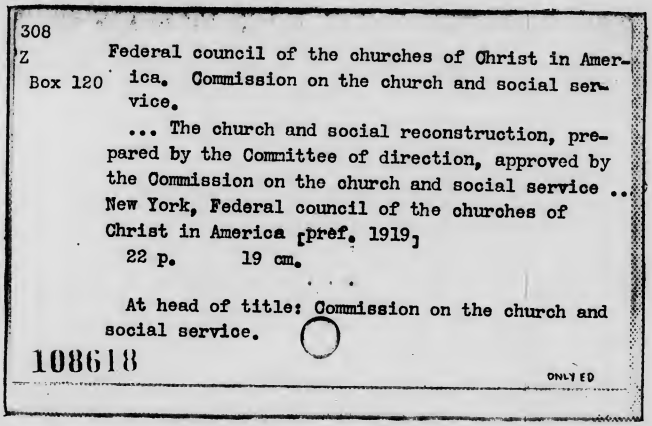
[1919]

97-84046-30
MASTER NEGATIVE #

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
PRESERVATION DIVISION

BIBLIOGRAPHIC MICROFORM TARGET

ORIGINAL MATERIAL AS FILMED - EXISTING BIBLIOGRAPHIC RECORD



308
Z
Box 120

Federal council of the churches of Christ in America. Commission on the church and social service.

... The church and social reconstruction, prepared by the Committee of direction, approved by the Commission on the church and social service .. New York, Federal council of the churches of Christ in America [pref. 1919]
22 p. 19 cm.

At head of title: Commission on the church and social service.

108618

ONLY ED

RESTRICTIONS ON USE: *Reproductions may not be made without permission from Columbia University Libraries.*

TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

FILM SIZE: 35mm REDUCTION RATIO: 10:1 IMAGE PLACEMENT: IA (IIA) IB IIB

DATE FILMED: 3-24-97 INITIALS: NS

TRACKING # : 22487

FILMED BY PRESERVATION RESOURCES, BETHLEHEM, PA.

COMMISSION ON THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL SERVICE

The Church and Social Reconstruction

Prepared by the Committee of Direction.

Approved by the Commission on the Church and Social Service.

Approved by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

FEDERAL COUNCIL OF THE
CHURCHES OF CHRIST IN AMERICA
105 EAST 22ND STREET, NEW YORK

FOREWORD

THIS statement on the Church and Social Reconstruction has been prepared to meet the need of a formulation of principles and an outline of a positive program of action for the churches in the social crisis following the war. It has been drawn with care, and represents the cooperation of many minds as will be recognized by looking over the personnel of the Committee of Direction and the approving bodies. In its preparation the committee has sought to crystallize the thinking of the churches and to erect a platform upon which there may be fairly united action. It has tried to keep in mind the rank and file of the membership of the churches, and especially of its ministers who must lead in these very difficult tasks.

New York, July 1st, 1919

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

I. INTRODUCTION

THE church finds itself this May of 1919 in the midst of profound unrest and suffering. The entire social fabric of some of the most advanced nations is in chaos and their people menaced by starvation, while other powerful nations, of which the United States is one, have experienced loss of life, material and capital in the great war, and serious industrial disorganization and unemployment. It is, moreover, a world suffering from overstrain and agitated by conflicting programs of reorganization.

In the midst of the confusion, stout hearted men and women are working with abundant courage to avert famine, to put the internal affairs of the nations in order again and to reconstruct international relations on a basis which shall tend to assure cooperation, disarmament and permanent peace. Surely this hour, which puts supreme obligations upon every social institution, is one which calls to the church to give its utmost, both of the ministries of personal religion and of unselfish public and social service.

Fortunately the church itself has undergone, within the last decade and especially during the war, an enlargement of scope which amounts to a transformation. The churches today recognize, as they did not a generation ago, that the Kingdom of God is as comprehensive as human life with all of its interests and needs, and that they share in a common responsibility for a Christian world order. They are convinced that the world is the subject of redemption; that the ethical principles of the Gospels are to be applied to industry and to the relations of

nations; that the church is to devote itself henceforth assiduously to these purposes along with the individual ministries of religion.

In taking this position the church realizes that it is on historic ground. It recalls the words of Isaiah: "Is this not the fast that I have chosen; to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?" It knows that the Second of the two Commandments, which our Savior interpreted by the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep, the Sheep and the Goats, and by His own ardent social ministry, leads straight into the struggle for social justice and for the larger life of humanity, here in this world. The Lord God has spoken to us, in this our day, and has lifted the vision of the church to this broader horizon of the Kingdom of God.

II. SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

The Social Creed of the Churches was formulated seven years ago as a statement of the social faith of the Protestant churches of the United States. Although necessarily general in its terms, it has been understood, and has had far reaching influence, especially in crystallizing the thought of Christian people. It has stood the test of these years, and we now reaffirm it as still expressing the ideals and purposes of the churches. But this earlier statement of social faith now requires additional statements to meet the changed world which has come out of the war. The declarations that follow may be considered as corollaries of these longstanding articles of faith. They should be read in connection with the statement on reconstruction of the various denominations in the United States and Canada, and the significant monograph of the Archbishop's Fifth Committee of the Church of England.

The Method

In some respects, the most urgent question before the world at the present time is the method of social reconstruction; shall it be by constitutional and peaceable methods, or by class struggle and violence? Shall we be willing to suddenly overturn the social order according to untried theories of industrial and political organization; or beginning where we are, and conserving what has been achieved in the past, shall we proceed by social experimentation, going as far and as fast as experience demonstrates to be necessary and desirable? In America, where, as in England, the people hold political power and freedom of discussion and association, and can do finally whatever they will, there is every reason for following the second method.

The supreme teachings of Christ are of love and brotherhood. These express themselves, in a democracy, in the cooperation of every citizen, for the good of each and all. This results ideally in a noble mutualism and in equal and world-wide justice, which constitute the highest goal of human endeavor. The doctrine of the class conscious struggle is opposed to this ideal. It is a reversion to earlier forms of competitive struggle. It not only strikes at injustice by greater and more savage injustice, but tends in practice to the breaking up of society, even of radical groups, into bitterly antagonistic factions, thus defeating its own ends. The dictatorship of the proletariat in practice is a new absolutism in the hands of a few men, and is as abhorrent as any other dictatorship. The hope of the world is in the cooperation of individuals and classes and the final elimination of classes in the brotherhood of a Christian society. To build up this cooperation should be the supreme endeavor of the churches.

Tendencies to Violence

Class consciousness and the use of violence are not confined to revolutionary groups. The possession of wealth and education tend to the formation of classes, and industrial ownership and management to a class conscious ruling group. We observe also with regret and deep concern numerous resorts to mob action in which returned soldiers and workmen have sometimes participated, frequently without police restraint, the continuing incitement to riot by certain public officials and periodicals, especially the partisan press with its misrepresentation and inflaming spirit, and the unfortunate and dangerous tendency of many state and municipal officials to deny fair hearings to radical offenders, and to use unnecessary and provocative brutality during strikes.

While conspiracy and violence must be restrained by the

police and military forces of the state, these should be used to maintain public peace and safety, and with due regard to the established rights of freedom of speech and peaceable assembly. It is undesirable that private citizens or groups of vigilantes should be allowed to take the law into their own hands. Legislators, judges and officials should act firmly but justly, without bluster and without unnecessary violence. Workingmen believe that they do not get an equal chance before the law, and it is highly important that whatever real basis there is for this conviction should be removed.

Labor's Share in Management

A deep cause of unrest in industry is the denial to labor of a share of industrial management. Controversies over wages and hours never go to the root of the industrial problem. Democracy must be applied to the government of industry as well as to the government of the nation, as rapidly and as far as the workers shall become able and willing to accept such responsibility. Laborers must be recognized as being entitled to as much consideration as employers and their rights must be equally safeguarded. This may be accomplished by assuring the workers, as rapidly as it can be done with due consideration to conditions, a fair share in control, especially in matters where they are directly involved; by opportunity for ownership, with corresponding representation; or, by a combination of ownership and control in cooperative production.

Trade agreements between employers and labor organizations can make provision for joint settlement of grievances, for guarantees against agression by the employer or the men, for willful limitation of output, for a shop discipline that shall be educative and shall make for efficiency by promoting good will. The various movements toward industrial councils and shop committees have not only an economic but a spiritual significance, in that they are or may be expressions of brotherhood, and recognize the right of the worker to full development of personality.

Rights and Obligations

One high value which comes with the participation of labor in management is that it makes possible again the hearty cooperation of all engaged in an industry and a new era of good will. Therefore, along with the rights involved in social justice go corresponding obligations. With the development of industrial democracy, the evidences of which are all about us, and the coming of the short work day, the importance of genuine cooperation in industrial processes and efficient production must be impressed upon large numbers of workers. As the worker tends to receive approximately what he produces, it must become apparent that what he has for himself and family, and the social surplus upon which depend the great common undertakings of society, are directly related to the productivity of his own labor, as well as finally of the length of the working day.

Industry as Service

The Christian and modern conception of industry makes it a public service. The parties of interest are not only labor and capital, but also the community, whose interest transcends that of either labor or capital. The state, as the governmental agency of the community, with the cooperation of all involved, should attempt to secure to the worker an income sufficient to maintain his family at a standard of living which the community can approve. This living wage should be made the first charge upon industry before dividends are considered. As to excess profits: after a just wage, fair salaries, interest upon capital and sinking funds have been provided, we commend the spirit and the conclusions of the Twenty British Quaker Employers in awarding the larger part of excess profits to the community, to be devoted voluntarily to public uses, or returned by taxation.

High Wages

The hoped for reduction in the cost of living has not yet materialized, and it is now evident that we are on a permanently higher price level. The resistance of labor to general wage reductions, even when accompanied by reduced hours of work, should therefore receive moral support from the community, except where the demand is clearly unreasonable. Wage levels must be high enough to maintain a standard of living worthy of responsible free citizenship in a democracy. As was pointed out in the statement on Social Reconstruction by the National Catho-

lic War Council, a considerable majority of the wage earners of the United States were not receiving living wages when prices began to rise in 1915. Real wages are also relative to the cost of living and vary with the purchasing power of the dollar. Actual wages, that is wages reckoned in power to purchase commodities, have been decreasing for several years in spite of wage increases. There is urgent need of provision by industry, under the guidance of the government, for some regular method of adjustment of wages and salaries to the purchasing power of money.

High wages are desirable as a general principle, since they mean, or should mean, a fairer share of the industrial product, greater purchasing power, and consequently, stimulated trade and greater happiness, health and hopefulness for the workers and their families. It should be kept in mind that under machine production, with a proper method of distribution, all might work and all might share in comparative plenty. Employers who plead a falling market, aggravated competition, increased hazard, or exceptional conditions in justification of low wages or wage reductions, should support their contentions by opening their books and submitting their figures to public scrutiny.

Unemployment

Unemployment is one of the tragedies of the present industrial order, which the war has demonstrated can be controlled, or at least effectively reduced, by the government and cooperating voluntary agencies. Any adequate attempt to meet the problem of unemployment should include:

(a) Rehabilitation and permanent maintenance of a coordinated nation-wide employment service.

(b) Reorganization of seasonal trades, wherever practicable, so as to make continuous employment possible.

(c) A policy of public works and land settlement framed with particular reference to the absorption of unemployed labor.

(d) A guarded extension of provisions and opportunities for social insurance to cover unemployment due to industrial conditions, or to ill health, accident or old age. To offer work, is more valuable than unemployment insurance.

(e) The rehabilitation of industrial cripples under the direction of the state and at the expense of industry. The possibilities of such rehabilitation have been demonstrated in relation to the cripples of war.

Vocational Training

The provision made by the Federal Government for the vocational training of large numbers of soldiers and sailors, including all participants in the war who suffered any considerable disability, should be the beginning of a general policy of vocational training, not merely in the interest of industrial efficiency, or primarily for private profit, but as part of a sound educational policy. It should include the human relations and social responsibilities of industry, and the general principles of industrial democracy. Secondary, higher and professional education should be made more generally available to those who cannot meet their high cost, so that the best training shall be placed effectively within the reach of the aspiring youth of the humblest household.

Paying for the War

The American war debt, while not comparable with that of European belligerents, will yet be very large. Powerful influences are organized to shift the burdens of this debt upon the public, while the public itself is unorganized and practically unable to protect itself. A beginning has been made in direct taxes, some of which have been levied upon the minor luxuries of the people, and a revolt has already taken place against this policy throughout the country. These taxes are now likely to be charged up to producers, and they in turn will recoup themselves by indirect charges, the fairness of which the public will not be in a position to estimate.

Perhaps no greater or more perplexing problem of fair distribution of wealth has ever been faced in this country. It is very necessary that a policy in the matter shall be carefully worked out in the interest of public welfare, to maintain, and, if possible, to advance the general standard of living, and that it shall not be settled by a selfish struggle of interests. While the cost of the war should fall in a fair measure upon all, resolute use should be made of the now accepted graduated income and inheritance taxes, as a just method for placing the heavier burdens of the

debt upon those most able to bear them, and lifting them correspondingly from the shoulders of those least able to carry them.

Freedom of Discussion

The inevitable special restrictions, during the war, upon speech, assembly and the press, should be removed with the signing of the peace covenant. While immunity can never be granted to one who speaks or acts knowingly against the public safety, censorship is essentially abhorrent in a democracy, and can be tolerated only in a compelling emergency. To those imprisoned for conscientious reasons, whose offenses were prompted by motives that were beyond a reasonable doubt honest and disinterested, general amnesty should be granted as soon as peace is established. The continued imprisonment of such persons can result only in a sense of injury that makes for discontent, and in depriving the communities to which they belong of that service which, the war being over, they may safely be counted upon to render.

Democratic Rights of Women

The importance of the democratic rights of women is not as yet comprehended by public opinion. Their freedom, their right to political and economic equality with men, are fundamental to democracy and to the safety of the future. The church stands also for adequate safeguards to industrial women, for a living wage, the eight hour day as a maximum requirement; prohibition of night work, equal pay for equal work, and other standard requirements of industry in which women are engaged.

The necessity for protective legislation, such as the limiting of hours and the prohibition of night work, is shown by the survey of women's labor in one of the states, submitted to the governor by the Director of the Women in Industry Service of the Federal Department of Labor, which reveals that out of 112 large plants studied, only ten per cent. have an eight hour day, and one-third of the employers of plants worked women as long as 65, 73, 75, 84, and 88 hours and 40 minutes a week. Five states have as yet no legislation governing the working hours of women.

While taking these positions the church believes that home making and motherhood will always be the great profession of

womankind; and to this end, the church should use its great influence to secure for woman in the home, economic independence, the control of her own person, and a professional standing in her work equal to that of men in any service which they render.

Justice to the Negro

The splendid service of the colored soldiers in the war, and the unanimous loyalty and devotion of the colored people of the nation, reinforce the justness of the demand that they should be recognized fully as Americans and fellow citizens, that they should be given equal economic and professional opportunities, with increasing participation in all community affairs and that a spirit of friendship and cooperation should obtain between the white and colored people, north and south. The colored people should have parks and playgrounds, equal wages for equal work, adequate and efficient schools, courteous and equal facilities and courtesy when traveling, adequate housing, lighting and sanitation, police protection and equality before the law. Especially should the barbarism of lynching be condemned by public opinion and abolished by rigorous measures and penalties.

Housing

The housing situation in the cities and industrial communities of the nation has become serious because of the cessation of building during the war, and is resulting in overcrowding and marked increase of rents. The wartime housing projects of the Government, where they are well located and clearly needed, should be completed. Above all, the housing standards set by the Government during the war should never be lowered. In the emergency we urge persons who have free capital, to invest in homes for the workers, first, however, studying the problem of housing in its modern aspects. It is especially necessary to watch efforts in the various state legislatures to break down protective legislation.

The ideal of housing is to provide every family with a good home, where possible an individual house, at reasonable rates, with standard requirements of light, heat, water and sanitation; and to encourage home owning by securing a living wage, permanence of employment, cheap transit to and from work, and

ending the speculative holding of lands in and around cities and towns.

Menacing Social Facts

The war has brought to the knowledge and attention of the nation, certain menacing social facts. We have learned that one-tenth of our people are unnaturalized aliens; that on an average, twenty-five per cent. of the men of the training camps were not able to read a newspaper or to write a letter home; that one-third of the men of the selective draft were physically unfit; that there are approximately two million mental defectives in the United States; that there is an alarming prevalence of venereal infections.

Nation wide movements are now in formation, under the leadership of departments of the Government, but including the cooperation of the entire social organization of the country, to meet these problems, concentrating especially at this time upon the Americanization of immigrants, and upon sex morality and the control of venereal diseases. All of these movements appeal strongly to the churches and will receive their energetic co-operation.

Americanization

The church is in a position to render great service in Americanization because of its extensive missions to immigrants and because thousands of our churches in crowded areas now reach the foreign born. The contribution of the churches has special value, since, in addition to instruction in English, they are able to interpret the religious and moral ideals of America, and since they work in an atmosphere of brotherliness, with an appreciation of what these peoples are bringing from the old world to enrich American life. The church is also deeply concerned that the living conditions of these people shall, as soon as possible, approximate our American standards. If they are underpaid, or poorly housed or otherwise neglected or exploited, we shall not only fail in their Americanization but they will drag down the standards of American labor. It should be recognized also that an effective shop management, in which labor is given its proper responsibility, is difficult to organize when the men do

not understand each other's speech, and represent divergent national labor experiences. Americanization is therefore necessary to the development of industrial democracy.

A New Social Morality

The church has also certain manifest functions and duties in the cooperative effort which is being organized by the Public Health Service for sex morality and the control of venereal diseases. Its most important function is the instruction of children and young people in the spiritual ideals of love and the relation of the sexes; the training of young men to be good husbands and fathers as well as of young women to be good wives and mothers; personal watchfulness by pastors, teachers and leaders of clubs over young people, especially over those who manifest tendencies to indiscretion; educational assistance to parents in the training of their children.

State legislation requiring certificates of freedom from venereal infection before marriage is in an experimental stage. Such laws require careful formulation and a thorough education of public opinion. They should be made a part of regulations aiming to prevent the marriage of persons unfitted to become the parents of children because of these or other infections, or because of other physical or mental disqualifications. In the absence of such laws, or of their effective enforcement, parents should look carefully into these matters before the marriage of their children.

The churches should cooperate in community efforts to abolish segregated vice districts, to make humane provision for prostitutes, and for clinical treatment of infected persons. While favorable to the establishment of clinics for the treatment of infected persons, the church cannot advocate prophylaxis. Treatment to prevent infection is likely to result finally in an increase of social immorality, and has been demonstrated by the experience of segregation, in an increase of venereal diseases. The church must use its utmost educational influence to strengthen self-control and to preserve the religious sanctions of marriage and the integrity of the home.

Repressive and curative measures are inadequate without also a simultaneous attempt to secure a freer scope for normal sex

expression through all grades of association between men and women, from comradeship to marriage. To this end it is important to provide abundant wholesome opportunities for the association of the sexes, the possibilities for earlier marriages through economic freedom, and the encouragement of love and unselfish devotion of men and women to each other in the home. The church, which brings both sexes and all ages into normal relations, is admirably fitted to provide for this wholesome association of the sexes, and to do so should become an object of definite endeavor.

Substitutes for the Saloon

Prohibition has now become a part of our basic law. That it should fail of enforcement through apathy, or in consequence of the influence of special interests, is inconceivable in a democratic country. Whatever vigilance is necessary to make the law effective will surely not be lacking.

The passing of the saloon, which with all its pernicious influences, was yet a social center to a multitude of men, creates a new obligation to replace it with wholesome equivalents. Community centers, the church as a social center, fraternal orders and private clubs, public recreation, education in the use of leisure time,—all these should be developed rapidly and with great power and attractiveness. Especially should our churches be opened seven days in the week, with helpful religious, educational and social activities. But let us remember that the best equivalent is the home; and that whatever makes homes possible and renders them beautiful surpasses every other method.

III. THE CHURCH IN THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT

When the church enters upon the actual tasks of social reconstruction, it undertakes problems that are highly technical, often controversial, and difficult for an organization which is composed of men of all parties and movements. But a hesitant policy will get nowhere in the present crisis, nor will general statements or casual service avail. The ordinary preacher cannot be an economist or sociologist, nor is he, as a rule, familiar with industrial management. But the moral issues of reconstruction are confused and difficult, and it is concerning them that the minister may be presumed to have technical knowledge. The church which does not show the way here is derelict to its duty.

The Church's Distinctive Program

The right policy for the church is therefore to study social problems from the point of view of the spirit and teachings of Christ, and, acting loyally and unselfishly upon these teachings, to exert its vast educational influence and use its institutional organization for human happiness, social justice, and the democratic organization of society. This looks toward a positive program, which may here coincide with social movements and tendencies, there oppose them; in which the church knows its own mind and has the power of united action. Within this cooperation liberal and even radical positions may be held with propriety by leaders and minority groups in the church, for the broadest liberty and fellowship are desirable. It is only necessary that all should remember that they represent a wide and generally conservative membership, which must be led, not driven, and which responds to wise, patient and educative leadership.

A Great Social Force

It is important also at this time, that the churches, and especially ministers, should be conscious of the fact that they are part of a corporate entity and that the public should realize that there is available in the churches, in a sense, a great new social force. This is evidenced by the fact that there are in the United States 135,000 ministers, priests and rabbis in charge of congregations, who minister to 42,000,000 actual communicants. In the Protestant churches there are 115,000 ministers in charge of congregations, 25,000,000 communicants, an influential religious press, a great system of educational institutions, and large numbers of social agencies, such as hospitals and child-caring foundations.

The value of the church for national causes is one of the

outstanding discoveries of the war, and its assistance is now being sought by every great movement. The church should respond with all its power, especially through pastors and the church press, bringing into action all its educational facilities, and taking its place in the community organization to which all such movements finally come for their main effort.

The church is both an educational force and an institution organized for neighborhood and community service. Its buildings are important social centers, capable of great enlargement of activities. If directed intelligently and with public spirit, so that it can never be truthfully charged with self-seeking, or the desire to control the state, it may become one of the potent and beneficent factors of a turbulent era. The religious bodies have learned to act together during the war, and it is now possible, to a considerable extent, to use them as a united force for such purposes as are expressed in these statements.

A Ministry of Education

The period of readjustment requires above all else patient, honest and critical thought. The problems pressing for solution have a spiritual phase which the church should interpret and emphasize. More than ever the training of ministers should include economics, sociology and politics. The preacher should take seriously his teaching office and be a leader of thought among his people. He should induce the employers of his church to make conscientious study of their problems and duties; and the wage earners likewise, seeking also to bring the groups together in sympathetic understanding.

A signal service may be done by the church in developing community ideals by means of the forum method of discussion. A service of worship in the morning and a forum service in the evening for the study and emphasis of the social phase of religious experience and obligation, constitute a well balanced Sunday program. Worship and discussion can be combined simply and appropriately. In this way many a church may also redeem its Sunday night service.

Community Relations

Community relations and responsibility will henceforth bulk large in the work of local churches. A pastor is not only a citizen

but the leader of a disciplined force, with, therefore, a double obligation to public service. It is a false idea that the churches are only concerned with religious, educational and charitable enterprises. They are, or should be, vitally concerned with civic, economic, and other social interests. And what is here said refers not only to churches in towns and cities, but with especial force to rural churches, because of the limited social agencies and resources of rural communities.

In a comprehensive statement of this kind, it is also necessary to say that local churches can never constitute a powerful social force, until they are effectively federated and intelligently related to the social movement of their community. The next ten years should see the Protestant churches working unitedly in every community, and Catholic, Hebrew and Protestant churches cooperating in social effort. Here is one field in which theological and historical differences need not figure, in which religion may become a uniting, and not, as too often at present, a divisive force.

We advise church people and pastors to take sympathetic interest in the community center movement in their own community, to assist in its development, to keep it out of the control of the politicians, and under the control of public spirited citizens, and to avoid needless duplication of buildings and effort. It is very important that such centers should be well supervised by trained workers.

The Church and Working People

One of the important tasks of the next ten years is to bring the church into closer relations with the wage earners of the nation. We have been negligent in this matter, and have suffered a rude awakening in needless estrangements. The main features in this task are as follows:

(a) The creation, as rapidly as possible, of many hundreds of powerful highly socialized and democratically organized churches in working class neighborhoods of cities and industrial centers, and the development of special methods for problems which require distinctive treatment, such as those encountered in logging camps, company towns, and among night workers and submerged populations.

(b) The development by the seminaries and by other methods of training, of specially trained ministers who know how to administer such churches, men who know economics and social problems as well as theology, and who desire to devote their lives to the welfare of the masses.

(c) A powerful effort by the whole church, but concentrating in these churches, and in alliance with the workers themselves, to achieve the great objects for which the workers are struggling; such as living wages, reasonable hours, safe conditions of labor, equal opportunities and pay for women, participation in management and ownership, and abolition of child labor.

(d) Surveys of the working class resident districts of our cities and industrial centers, in order to lay out, with common consent, large non-competing parishes for these churches, and to secure as rapidly as possible, the closing out of competing churches and the placing of their financial equities in other non-competing centers. This will require the cooperation of city missionary societies and federations of churches, and also of home mission boards.

Moral Reconstruction

The experiences of the war, revealing as they do reversion to barbarous practices by highly civilized peoples, the nearness to the surface of savage instincts and deep selfishness in vast numbers of men, the willingness to profiteer on the part of workers as well as employers, the intensity of racial, national and religious antagonisms—these experiences have demonstrated anew that the progress of humanity is dependent not alone upon social organization, but upon the strength of the moral emotions and the discipline of character. Whether the work that is to be done in reconstruction, beginning with the peace treaty itself, shall yield satisfaction or disappointment, will depend mainly upon the working capital of moral character among the peoples who undertake the tasks.

Now that the war is over the church should return to its historic functions, of Christian nurture, evangelism and religious education, with new sanctions, and a sure knowledge that its ministry to the inner life and to the building of character are after all its greatest contribution to social welfare. If the

governments of the world have learned the lesson of the war, they will encourage the church in these vital undertakings, and they will themselves turn with renewed energy to the work of education. They will drive hard at that moral discipline which alone can fortify our democratic ideals. Every movement of social reform will be partial and disappointing until a powerful work of education, both general and religious, has been accomplished.

IV. CONCLUSION

It must not be forgotten that in social reconstruction we are dealing with matters that vitally affect the welfare and happiness of millions of human beings, and that we have come upon times when people are not submissive to injustice or to unnecessary privation and suffering. They are deeply and justly in earnest. As has been said, we are laying the foundations of a new world. If those who are the actual industrial, political and social leaders of the nation will not act upon the principle that the greatest shall be the servant of all, then the people themselves, with indignation and bitterness, are sure to take their destiny and that of the world into their own hands. The social question cannot be dealt with casually. People who are born with unusual ability, of whatever kind, or who receive special advantages, are given them for unselfish service. Large holdings of property can be justified only by devotion to the common good. We are entering upon an era in which the absorbing concern of the world will be for social justice and the greatest wellbeing of the greatest number. This will animate the religious spirit of the future—a spirit which has found its supreme expression and example in Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX

The Social Creed of the Churches

(Adopted by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, December 4th, 1908. Adopted in its present form December 9th, 1912, and reapproved December 11th, 1916).

The Churches stand for—

I. Equal rights and justice for all men and in all stations of life.

II. Protection of the family by the single standard of purity, uniform divorce laws, proper regulation of marriage, proper housing.

III. The fullest possible development of every child, especially by the provision of education and recreation.

IV. Abolition of child labor.

V. Such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

VI. Abatement and prevention of poverty.

VII. Protection of the individual and society from the social, economic and moral waste of the liquor traffic.

VIII. Conservation of health.

IX. Protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases and mortality.

X. The right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, for safeguarding this right against encroachments of every kind, for the protection of workers from the hardships of enforced unemployment.

XI. Suitable provision for the old age of the workers, and for those incapacitated by injury.

XII. The right of employees and employers alike to organize; and for adequate means of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes.

XIII. Release from employment one day in seven.

XIV. Gradual and reasonable reduction of hours of labor to the lowest practicable point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is a condition of the highest human life.

XV. A living wage as the minimum in every industry, and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.

XVI. A new emphasis upon the application of Christian principles to the acquisition and use of property, and for the most equitable division of the product of industry that can ultimately be devised.

MSH 22487

END OF
TITLE